What is claimed is:

1. A distribution system that distributes a program for decoding encoded audio data, comprising:

a distribution server device which sends the program;

a removable memory unit which has an area for storing one or more programs;

an acquisition device which, being connected to the distribution server device via a network and loaded with the removable memory unit, acquires the program from the distribution server device and stores the program into the removable memory unit; and

an audio reproduction device which, being loaded with the removable memory unit storing the program, decodes the encoded audio data using the program, and outputs sounds.

2. The distribution system of Claim 1,

wherein the removable memory unit stores one or more programs which are each used for decoding encoded audio data of a different type,

the audio reproduction device stores a detection module beforehand, the detection module being a program module used for detecting a type of the encoded audio data, and

the audio reproduction device detects the type of the encoded audio data using the detection module, reads the program for decoding encoded audio data of the detected type from the removable memory unit, and decodes the encoded audio data using the read program.

3. The distribution system of Claim 2,

wherein the distribution server device sends permission information which indicates that the program is permitted to use, in correspondence with the program,

the acquisition device acquires the permission information, and stores the permission information into the removable memory unit in correspondence with the program, and

the audio reproduction device decodes the encoded audio data using the program, only when the permission information corresponding to the program is stored in the removable memory unit.

4. The distribution system of Claim 3,

wherein the distribution server device sends condition information which shows a condition for using the program, in correspondence with the program,

the acquisition device acquires the condition information, and stores the condition information into

the removable memory unit in correspondence with the program, and

the audio reproduction device judges whether the program is permitted to use based on the condition shown by the condition information stored in the removable memory unit, and decodes the encoded audio data using the program only when the program is judged as being permitted to use.

5. The distribution system of Claim 4,

wherein the condition information is period information that limits a period during which the program is permitted to use,

the distribution server device sends the period information,

the acquisition device acquires the period information and stores the period information into the removable memory unit, and

the audio reproduction device judges that the program is permitted to use, if current date and time is within the period shown by the period information.

6. The distribution device of Claim 4,

wherein the condition information is number information which limits a remaining number of times the

program is permitted to use,

the distribution server device sends the number information,

the acquisition device acquires the number information and stores the number information into the removable memory unit, and

the audio reproduction device judges that the program is permitted to use, if the number shown by the number information is not smaller than 1, the number being decreased by 1 each time the audio reproduction device decodes encoded audio data using the program.

7. The distribution system of Claim 3,

wherein the distribution server device generates a user identifier which identifies a user of the audio reproduction device, stores the generated user identifier, and also sends the generated user identifier, and

the acquisition device acquires the user identifier and stores the user identifier into the removable memory unit.

8. The distribution system of Claim 7 that further distributes maintenance information for updating the program,

wherein the acquisition device reads the user

identifier from the removable memory unit, and sends the user identifier to the distribution server device,

the distribution server device (a) stores the maintenance information beforehand in correspondence with the program, (b) receives the user identifier, (c) judges whether the received user identifier matches the user identifier stored in the distribution server device, and (d) sends the maintenance information if the two user identifiers are judged as matching, and

the acquisition device acquires the maintenance information, and updates the program stored in the removable memory unit using the acquired maintenance information.

9. The distribution system of Claim 8,

wherein the distribution server device generates a permission information identifier which identifies the permission information, stores the generated permission information identifier, and also sends the generated permission information identifier, and

the acquisition device acquires the permission information identifier, and stores the permission information identifier into the removable memory unit.

10. The distribution system of Claim 9,

wherein the acquisition device reads the permission information identifier from the removable memory unit, and sends the permission information identifier to the distribution server device, and

the distribution server device (a) receives the permission information identifier, (b) judges whether the received permission information identifier matches the permission information identifier stored in the distribution server device, and (c) sends the maintenance information if the two permission information identifiers are judged as matching.

11. The distribution system of Claim 3 further comprising an account server device,

wherein the acquisition device is connected to the account server device via the network, and sends payment information to the account server device, the payment information indicating that payment has been made for the acquisition of the program,

the account server device is connected to the distribution server device via the network, and when receiving the payment information, sends confirmation information to the distribution server device, the confirmation information confirming that the payment has been made for the acquisition of the program, and

the distribution server device sends the program, when receiving the confirmation information.

12. The distribution system of Claim 2,

wherein the distribution server device sends an alternative detection module that is a program module used, instead of the detection module stored in the audio reproduction device, for detecting the type of the encoded audio data,

the acquisition device acquires the alternative detection module from the distribution server device, and stores the alternative detection module into the removable memory unit, and

the audio reproduction device reads the alternative detection module from the removable memory unit, and detects the type of the encoded audio data using the alternative detection module instead of the detection module.

13. An audio reproduction device for decoding encoded audio data and outputting sounds in a distribution system that includes a distribution server device, an acquisition device, and the audio reproduction device, wherein the distribution server device sends a program for decoding the encoded audio data to the acquisition

device via a network, a removable memory unit is loaded to the acquisition device, the acquisition device writes the program into the removable memory unit, and the removable memory unit storing the program is loaded to the audio reproduction device, the audio reproduction device comprising:

a reading unit operable to read the program from the removable memory unit;

a decoding unit operable to decode the encoded audio data using the program, to generate audio data; and

a sound outputting unit operable to convert the audio data to the sounds and output the sounds.

14. The audio reproduction device of Claim 13,

wherein the removable memory unit stores one or more programs which are each used for decoding encoded audio data of a different type,

the audio reproduction device further comprises:

a storage area which stores a detection module beforehand, the detection module being a program module used for detecting a type of the encoded audio data, and

the decoding unit detects the type of the encoded audio data using the detection module, reads the program for decoding encoded audio data of the detected type from the removable memory unit, and decodes the encoded audio

data using the read program.

15. The audio reproduction device of Claim 14,

wherein the removable memory unit stores permission information indicating that the program is permitted to use, in correspondence with the program, and

the decoding unit decodes the encoded audio data using the program, only when the permission information corresponding to the program is stored in the removable memory unit.

16. The audio reproduction device of Claim 15 further comprising:

a displaying unit operable to display a message indicating that the program is prohibited to use, when the permission information is not stored in the removable memory unit.

17. The audio reproduction device of Claim 15,

wherein the removable memory unit stores condition information showing a condition for using the program, in correspondence with the program, and

the decoding unit judges whether the program is permitted to use based on the condition shown by the condition information stored in the removable memory unit,

and decodes the encoded audio data using the program when the program is judged as being permitted to use.

18. The audio reproduction device of Claim 17,

wherein the condition information is period information that limits a period during which the program is permitted to use, and

the decoding unit judges that the program is permitted to use, if current date and time is within the period shown by the period information.

19. The audio reproduction device of Claim 17,

wherein the condition information is number information that limits a remaining number of times the program is permitted to use, and

the decoding unit judges that the program is permitted to use, if the number shown by the number information is not smaller than 1, the number being decreased by 1 each time the decoding unit decodes encoded audio data using the program.

20. The audio reproduction device of Claim 15 further comprising:

a displaying unit operable to display an identifier that identifies the program which is permitted to use,

based on the permission information stored in the removable memory unit.

21. The audio reproduction device of Claim 15, wherein the program is made up of subprograms, the audio reproduction device further comprises:

a subprogram storage area which is used for storing a subprogram; and

a loading unit operable to write the subprograms in sequence into the subprogram storage area, and

the decoding unit decodes the encoded audio data using the subprograms written in the subprogram storage area.

22. The audio reproduction device of Claim 15, wherein the program is made up of subprograms, the audio reproduction device further comprises:

two subprogram storage areas which are each used for storing a subprogram; and

a loading unit operable to write the subprograms in sequence into the two subprogram storage areas alternately, and

the decoding unit decodes the encoded audio data, alternately using the subprograms written in the two subprogram storage areas.

23. The audio reproduction device of Claim 15, wherein the removable memory unit stores a unique program beforehand, instead of the program,

the audio reproduction device further comprises:

a ROM storing unit which is made of a read-only semiconductor memory and stores a common subprogram beforehand, the program being made up of the unique subprogram and the common subprogram;

a RAM storing unit which is made of a readable and rewritable semiconductor memory, and has an area for storing the unique subprogram; and

a loading unit operable to read the unique subprogram from the removable memory unit, and write the unique subprogram into the RAM storing unit, and

the decoding unit decodes the encoded audio data, using the common subprogram and the unique subprogram which are respectively stored in the ROM storing unit and the RAM storing unit.

24. The audio reproduction device of Claim 14, wherein the removable memory unit stores an alternative detection module which is a program module used, instead of the detection module stored in the audio reproduction device, for detecting the type of the encoded

audio data, the alternative detection module being sent from the distribution server device to the acquisition device and written into the removable memory unit by the acquisition device,

the audio reproduction device further comprises:

a loading unit operable to read the alternative detection module from the removable memory unit, and write the alternative detection module into the storage area, and

the decoding unit detects the type of the encoded audio data using the alternative detection module instead of the detection module.

25. An audio reproduction device for decoding encoded audio data and outputting sounds in a distribution system that includes a distribution server device, an acquisition device, and the audio reproduction device, wherein the distribution server device sends a program for decoding the encoded audio data to the acquisition device via a network, the audio reproduction device is connected to the acquisition device, and the acquisition device writes the program into a program storing unit in the audio reproduction device, the audio reproduction device comprising:

the program storing unit which stores one or more

programs which are each used for decoding encoded audio data of a different type;

a module storing unit which stores a detection module beforehand, the detection module being a program module used for detecting a type of the encoded audio data;

a decoding unit operable to detect the type of the encoded audio data using the detection module, read the program for decoding encoded audio data of the detected type from the program storing unit, and decode the encoded audio data using the read program to generate audio data; and

a sound outputting unit operable to convert the audio data to the sounds and output the sounds.

26. A distribution server device that sends a program for decoding encoded audio data, to an acquisition device via a network, comprising:

a storing unit which stores the program and permission information in correspondence beforehand, the permission information indicating that the program is permitted to use;

a reading unit operable to read the program and the permission information from the storing unit; and

a sending unit operable to send the program and the permission information to the acquisition device via the

network.

27. An acquisition device for acquiring a program for decoding encoded audio data, from a distribution server device, comprising:

a receiving unit operable to receive the program and permission information indicating that the program is permitted to use, from the distribution server device to which the acquisition device is connected via a network; and

a writing unit operable to write the program and the permission information into a removable memory unit.

28. A removable memory medium comprising:

a non-authentication storage area which stores a program for decoding encoded audio data; and

an authentication storage area which stores permission information indicating that the program is permitted to use, in correspondence with the program,

wherein an access device is allowed to access the authentication storage area only when the access device has succeeded in mutual device authentication with the removable memory medium.

29. The removable memory medium of Claim 28,

wherein the non-authentication storage area also stores a detection module used for detecting a type of the encoded audio data.

30. A distribution method for use in a distribution system that distributes a program for decoding encoded audio data, the distribution system including: a distribution server device; a removable memory unit having an area for storing the program; an acquisition device which is connected to the distribution server device via a network and loaded with the removable memory unit; and an audio reproduction device which is loaded with the removable memory unit, the distribution method comprising:

a distribution server step, executed by the distribution server device, for sending the program for decoding the encoded audio data;

an acquiring step, executed by the acquisition device, for acquiring the program and storing the program into the removable memory unit; and

an audio reproducing step, executed by the audio reproduction device, for decoding the encoded audio data using the program stored in the removable memory unit, and outputting sounds.

31. An audio reproduction method for use in an audio reproduction device that decodes encoded audio data and outputs sounds, wherein a distribution server device sends a program for decoding the encoded audio data to an acquisition device via a network, a removable memory unit is loaded to the acquisition device, the acquisition device writes the program into the removable memory unit, and the removable memory unit storing the program is loaded to the audio reproduction device, the audio reproduction method comprising:

a reading step for reading the program from the removable memory unit;

a decoding step for decoding the encoded audio data using the program, to generate audio data; and

a sound outputting step for converting the audio data to the sounds and outputting the sounds.

32. A computer-readable recording medium recording a distribution program for use in a distribution computer system that distributes a program for decoding encoded audio data, the distribution system including: a distribution server device; a removable memory unit having an area for storing the program; an acquisition device which is connected to the distribution server device via a network and loaded with the removable memory

unit; and an audio reproduction device which is loaded with the removable memory unit, the distribution program comprising:

a distribution server step, executed by the distribution server device, for sending the program for decoding the encoded audio data;

an acquiring step, executed by the acquisition device, for acquiring the program and storing the program into the removable memory unit; and

an audio reproducing step, executed by the audio reproduction device, for decoding the encoded audio data using the program stored in the removable memory unit, and outputting sounds.

33. A computer-readable recording medium recording an audio reproduction program for use in a computer that decodes encoded audio data and outputs sounds, wherein a distribution server device sends a program for decoding the encoded audio data to an acquisition device via a network, a removable memory unit is loaded to the acquisition device, the acquisition device writes the program into the removable memory unit, and the removable memory unit storing the program is loaded to the computer, the audio reproduction program comprising:

a reading step for reading the program from the

removable memory unit;

a decoding step for decoding the encoded audio data using the program, to generate audio data; and

a sound outputting step for converting the audio data to the sounds and outputting the sounds.

34. A distribution program for use in a distribution computer system that distributes a program for decoding encoded audio data, the distribution system including: a distribution server device; a removable memory unit having an area for storing the program; an acquisition device which is connected to the distribution server device via a network and loaded with the removable memory unit; and an audio reproduction device which is loaded with the removable memory unit, the distribution program comprising:

a distribution server step, executed by the distribution server device, for sending the program for decoding the encoded audio data;

an acquiring step, executed by the acquisition device, for acquiring the program and storing the program into the removable memory unit; and

an audio reproducing step, executed by the audio reproduction device, for decoding the encoded audio data using the program stored in the removable memory unit,

and outputting sounds.

35. An audio reproduction program for use in a computer that decodes encoded audio data and outputs sounds, wherein a distribution server device sends a program for decoding the encoded audio data to an acquisition device via a network, a removable memory unit is loaded to the acquisition device, the acquisition device writes the program into the removable memory unit, and the removable memory unit storing the program is loaded to the computer, the audio reproduction program comprising:

a reading step for reading the program from the removable memory unit;

a decoding step for decoding the encoded audio data using the program, to generate audio data; and

a sound outputting step for converting the audio data to the sounds and outputting the sounds.